



June 4, 2014

KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-14-43

SUBJECT: LTP–Environmental Quality Incentives Program Cutoff Dates and Deadlines

Action required by field offices (FOs): July 7, 2014

Action required by area offices (AOs): June 6, 2014
June 20, 2014
July 18, 2014
August 1, 2014

Action required by state office (SO): June 6, 2014

Purpose: To announce the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) action dates

Expiration Date: September 30, 2015

This bulletin replaces Bulletin KS300-14-7. Action required by dates, contact information, and the distribution list have been updated.

Deadlines

To ensure consistency statewide, the aforementioned dates have been set for Program Contracts System (ProTracts) entries, screening tool entries, location county notification, ranking information, and peer reviews. **Servicing county offices shall notify location county offices of applications received in their counties by these dates as well** (e.g., Seneca servicing FO shall notify the Marysville location FO of the application number and ranking category of an application with land [or the majority of land] physically located in Marshall County). The FOs shall work together to ensure the application ranking is completed in a timely manner.

NOTE: National and Landscape initiatives shall have separate deadlines.

(more)

DIST: A, F, S, C. Nelson

Natural Resources Conservation Service
760 South Broadway Boulevard
Salina, Kansas 67401-4604

Phone: 785-823-4500
FAX: 855-533-5070
www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov

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The following information was entered in ProTracts for all applications on December 16, 2013:

- Program
- Application FY
- Sign-up Date
- Servicing Office
- Location County
- Applicant(s)
- Application Status (pending, eligible, ineligible, or cancelled)
- Fund Code

NOTE: Funds codes must not be changed after this date unless the participant is signing up for an EQIP initiative.

Applications will remain in “pending” status until all participant and land eligibility requirements have been met. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is under no obligation to evaluate or rank an application until these requirements are met.

Applicants without current eligibility determinations processed by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) (see Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual [CPM], Part 512, Section 512.24) should have been notified by the FO by mail with a Program Eligibility Certification Letter before December 20, 2013, and the letter template can be found in Title 440, CPM, Part 512, Section 512.91 (see attachment 1). The participant must file or update the required certifications within 30 days of receipt of the letter for the NRCS to consider the application for the current ranking period. If eligibility status of the participant is not updated within the 30-day period, the application will be determined ineligible.

If ineligibility is confirmed, the FO must notify the participant by certified mail using the Ineligibility Determination for Conservation Program Contract Letter (see attachment 2), which provides appeal rights according to Title 440, CPM, Part 510. The letter template can be found in Title 440, CPM, Part 512, Section 512.93. The application status in ProTracts must be changed to “ineligible.”

- Application priority was entered in ProTracts by the cutoff date of January 17, 2014. (Required for eligible applications in the Grazing Lands Health, Soil Health, and Water Quality ranking categories only.)
- Counties uploaded plans and ranked in ProTracts by the cutoff date of February 7, 2014.
- Application evaluation peer reviews were completed by February 21, 2014.
- AOs and SO will begin making funding decisions on **June 6, 2014**. Any funds remaining within a management unit shall be redistributed to the AOs by **June 20, 2014**.
- The regional conservationist shall review and obligate all approved applications of \$150,000 or greater as outlined in Bulletin KS300-14-41. The assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO) shall submit questionnaires to the appropriate program manager as soon as possible to meet program deadlines.
- Documentation shall be forwarded to the Financial Management Staff for second level review of obligations by **July 7, 2014**.

- ASTCs-FO shall notify the appropriate program manager of funds to be returned to the SO level by **July 18, 2014**. A second application evaluation period cutoff date shall be announced if there are remaining funds.

All approved applications shall be obligated (signed contract) by August 1, 2014.

Screening Tool Deadline

Using the screening tool is required for the Soil Health and Water Quality ranking categories (see Bulletin KS300-14-6). Applications with an eligible or pending status in the Water Quality and Soil Health ranking categories were entered into the screening tool database by December 16, 2013. Any applications not entered on time were considered a “Low Priority” application.

The SO ran the screening tool reports with the assigned priorities and were distributed to the AOs and FOs on December 13, 2013.

Reviews

ASTCs-FO shall ensure that all application evaluations (rankings) are peer reviewed (per Title 440, CPM, Part 515, Section 515.72[A][6]) prior to preapproval of applications. This review shall focus on the ranking and eligibility status of the contract.

Per the Kansas Quality Assurance Plan, a peer review of all approved applications prior to obligation is required. This review should focus on contract documentation.

Contact: Please forward questions, through established channels to Corey L. Nelson, Resource Conservationist, at 785-823-4580 or corey.nelson@ks.usda.gov.

(Signed)

ERIC B. BANKS
State Conservationist

Attachments